

## Corporate Social Responsibility in the restaurant and fast food industry: a study of communication on healthy eating through social networks

Responsabilidade Social Corporativa no setor de restaurantes e *fast food*: um estudo da comunicação sobre alimentação saudável por meio de redes sociais (resumo: p. 19)

Responsabilidad Social Corporativa en el sector restauración y *fast food*: estudio de la comunicación sobre alimentación saludable en redes sociales (resumen: p. 19)

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The communication of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) of a sample of eight restaurant and fast food companies is analyzed. An exploratory and descriptive method, based on the content analysis technique, is used to analyze the formal and informal CSR communication channels used to promote healthy eating on their respective websites and Twitter profiles. This study is complemented by a survey (n = 383) applied to a sample of young Spaniards to investigate their interest in healthy eating information, their assessment of CSR actions carried out in this area as well as the communication channels used for this purpose. The results confirm that the CSR policies of the companies include actions aimed at guaranteeing and promoting healthy eating. It is concluded about the convenience of using their own social networks and influencers to encourage healthy eating habits more effectively in their publics.

**Keywords:** Communication. Corporate social responsibility. Fast food. Healthy eating. Social networks.

## Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is an organization's commitment to reconcile its economic, ethical, social, environmental dimensions, which translates into voluntary initiatives that aim to contribute to social improvement<sup>1</sup>. These initiatives involve a diversity of actions that target different stakeholders and have as common denominator the combination of economic, social and environmental approaches with the goal of mutual gain. The companies that manage to demonstrate their concern for the wellbeing of their stakeholders will achieve greater success in their projects<sup>2,3</sup>.

This study focuses on the social dimension of CSR and more specifically on the promotion of healthy lifestyles. Currently, given the importance that society places on health, there are numerous examples of CSR policies that include actions aimed at promoting the adoption of healthy lifestyles in which communication is a key element<sup>4</sup>.

Companies are aware of the importance that their stakeholders attach to the social responsibility of corporations<sup>5,6</sup>. In the case of food businesses, it appears that they are assuming their responsibility in ensuring the health of the population<sup>7</sup>. The adoption of CSR policies can become a differentiating attribute, especially in relation to issues as relevant as food in the case of restaurant and fast food companies. Therefore, it is important to determine whether the companies in the restaurant and fast food industry have adopted the measures recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) and whether they communicate them effectively through their corporate social network accounts<sup>8</sup>.

The results of Capriotti and Zeler<sup>8</sup> confirm the importance of CSR communication. They have found that the way companies communicate their economic-legal and socio-ethical role can influence the image that individuals have about them. For Pérez-Martínez and Topa<sup>2</sup>, a negative perception of a company's CSR could have a lasting impact on customers' loyalty and purchasing decisions towards its products or services. On the contrary, a positive perception of a company's CSR actions increases customers' loyalty and favorable attitudes towards such company. Creating a transparent and committed CSR is and should be one of the main objectives of companies.

Empirical research carried out in Spain on the relationship between the perception of companies' CSR and customers' attitudes and behaviors is scarce<sup>2,3,8</sup>. It is, therefore, important to analyze customer perceptions regarding the different dimensions of CSR to be able to assess how these perceptions influence the future attitudes and conducts of customers. Capriotti and Zeler<sup>8</sup>, Pérez-Martínez and Topa<sup>2</sup>, Suárez-Rico et al.<sup>3</sup> also affirm that consumers are open to the information provided by organizations. Constant communication and promotion of CSR activities are therefore key to the success of companies<sup>1</sup>.

With regards to corporate communication, including CSR communication, it is essential to consider the changes experienced in recent years. The emergence of the internet has enabled two-way and instant communication between companies and audiences<sup>3,8,9</sup>. Specifically, social networks allow audiences to interact and

communicate with different brands, as well as to create content about them<sup>3,8,10</sup>. Thus, social networks such as Twitter have created new ways for organizations to establish and maintain relationships with their audiences<sup>11,12</sup>.

From the moment social networks began to offer tools to advertise products in a simple way, organizations benefited from this phenomenon<sup>12</sup>. Social networks represent a new exceptional space of horizontal relationship with the public, and it should not only be used to achieve corporate objectives, but also to meet the demands of society<sup>1,5,6,13</sup>. However, CSR activities are not regularly communicated through social networks<sup>8</sup>. Hence, this research aims to analyze the CSR communication carried out by restaurant and fast food companies to promote healthy eating on Twitter, one of the main social networks used by these companies to interact with their main audience, young people<sup>12,14-16</sup>.

Finally, with regard to healthy diet, it is worth noting the importance that governments and public and private sectors have given to the promotion of a healthy and balanced diet, the Mediterranean Diet, which highlights the importance of promoting good eating habits among children<sup>17,18</sup>. The WHO<sup>19,20</sup> recommends companies and public institutions to promote exercise, healthy eating, and healthy living practices. The measures that can be taken to develop healthy food environments should include national policies and investments in the commercial, food and agricultural industries, and ensure the participation and collaboration of public and private sectors<sup>21,22</sup>.

It is worth noting in this regard public initiatives such as the Naos Strategy<sup>23</sup>, which fosters collaboration between numerous associations and foundations following the recommendations of the WHO<sup>19,20,22</sup>. There are other public-private actions of this type, such as the agreements reached in the area of healthy eating between the Spanish Agency for Food Safety and Nutrition (AESAN, according to its initials in Spanish)<sup>(d)</sup> and some of the most important multinational companies, such as McDonald's, KFC and Telepizza, which contributed towards improving the image of this industry. Some of these brands are precisely part of the sample of this research.

<sup>(d)</sup> [http://www.aecosan.msssi.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/nutricion/ampliacion/convenios\\_aesan\\_boe.htm](http://www.aecosan.msssi.gob.es/AECOSAN/web/nutricion/ampliacion/convenios_aesan_boe.htm)

In view of current discussion, the main objective of this research is to analyze the promotion and dissemination of healthy eating habits as part of the CSR communication of franchises in the restaurant and fast food industry. The analysis also evaluates the extent to what these organizations take advantage of social networks to communicate aspects related to their ethical values and responsible behaviors<sup>1</sup> when they address their young stakeholders.

The hypotheses that guide this research are:

H1: Restaurant and fast food franchises promote healthy eating habits as part of their CSR strategies.

H2: Restaurant and fast food franchises take advantage of the tools offered by social networks, specifically Twitter, to carry out CSR communication effectively and achieve their corporate objectives<sup>24</sup>.

In line with the scope of study of this research, which is healthy eating, and based on Schmeltz's<sup>25</sup> postulates regarding the need to develop CSR strategies that match the interests of the public, to address the previous hypothesis on the advantages of social

networks for CSR communication, it is necessary to verify young Spaniards' interest in healthy eating. Accordingly, the following sub-hypotheses have been proposed:

H2.1. Healthy eating is a relevant and important topic to young Spaniards.

H2.2. Young Spaniards positively value the CSR actions of restaurant and fast food companies in the area of healthy eating.

H.2.3. Young Spaniards obtain information on healthy eating habits from social networks.

Within the restaurant and fast-food industry, the franchise sector has been chosen for this analysis due to its size and importance<sup>(e)</sup>. With regards to social networks, Twitter has been selected for the study due to its social and corporate relevance<sup>14,15</sup>.

<sup>(e)</sup> <http://www.franquiciadores.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Informe-La-Franquicia-en-Espa%C3%B1a-2019.pdf>

## Methods

This exploratory and descriptive research<sup>26</sup> is based on the content analysis of the CSR communication of a sample of restaurant and fast food franchises. Content analysis serves the main purpose of this research by allowing the evaluation of messages disseminated across all types of media and platforms in a systematic, objective, qualitative and quantitative manner<sup>27</sup>.

This analysis is complemented by a survey that investigates young Spaniards' interest in healthy eating, and their assessment of CSR communication actions and channels implemented in this field. The survey, of a quantitative nature, is used to systematically describe the behavior and perceptions of a previously defined population<sup>28</sup>.

The analysis of CSR communication is carried out from two perspectives: formal and informal, following the approach of Reilly and Larya<sup>29</sup>. At the formal level, the analysis focuses on the content of the corporate websites of each of the selected franchises. Corporate websites have already been used for the analysis of CSR communication in previous research<sup>30,31</sup>.

This formal analysis starts with the identification of all first- and second-level content sections, with the exception of those related to current content (news, newsletters, social networks posts), and continues with their assessment based on the premises of the WHO<sup>19,20,22,32</sup> regarding healthy dieting. To this end, a list of keywords (fat, calories, sport, diet, etc.) was extracted from the series of recommendations made by the WHO, and subsequently used as a set of search terms to examine the relevant sections of the selected websites.

With regards to the informal level of CSR communication<sup>29</sup>, all contents published by the selected brands in 2018 have been analyzed. Tweets and retweets on healthy eating were identified using the same premises used for websites<sup>19,20,22,32</sup> and subjected to content analysis, following the procedure used by Cortado and Chalmeta<sup>33</sup> and Suárez-Rico et al.<sup>3</sup> for the analysis of CSR communication on this social network.

Following Krippendorff's<sup>27</sup> recommendations, the content analysis procedure was developed in two stages. The first one consisted of the identification of the unit of analysis: the sections of the websites and, in the case of Twitter, the tweets and retweets. The analysis of these units was carried out with a coding sheet that facilitated the assessment of the presence of contents related to healthy eating.

The design of the coding sheets used for the analysis of both the websites and the Twitter accounts is based on previous research works on CSR communication on websites<sup>30,31</sup> and Twitter<sup>3,33</sup>. In this sense, the identification of messages on healthy eating is based on the parameter "posts (tweets and retweets) and typology (content)", which distinguishes publications on the nutritional content of products, good practices related to healthy eating and exercise or physical activity from other publications. This typology of CSR communication on healthy eating is a contribution to the reviewed models and has been established on the basis of the premises of the WHO<sup>19,20,22,32</sup>.

When tweets and retweets include photographs and/or videos, they are also analyzed using the methods used in previous research in this field<sup>3,34</sup>. When the same tweet or retweet can be classified into more than one category, the one that best matches the dominant message is selected. For example, at first sight, the tweet in Figure 1 seems to belong to the 'products and services' category, however, the text does not make any reference to the product in the picture, which indicates that it actually belongs to the 'customer service, courtesy' category. In general terms, all posts were easy to classify and the few cases that were unclear were resolved by three independent intercoders<sup>35</sup>.



**Figure 1.** Example of a "Products and Services" tweet published by Subway  
Source: Subway's Twitter account (10<sup>th</sup> November, 2017)

Moreover, the analysis of social networks also includes user interactivity to determine the degree of interest generated by CSR communication on healthy eating in comparison to the rest of tweets and retweets. To this end, we used the online engagement formula reviewed by Martínez-Sala and Segarra-Saavedra<sup>36</sup>. In the field of websites, the analysis was carried out from January to March 2019. The analysis of Twitter content was carried out as a registered user and as a follower of the accounts under analysis in the same period.

The survey questionnaire was designed with Google Forms and distributed via email to undergraduate professors from different Spanish public universities, who were asked to send it to their students, who in turn distributed them to their contacts. This sampling technique is known as snowball<sup>37</sup> and its representativeness is justified below.

The survey questionnaire included the basic objectives of the research as well as the names and contact information of researchers so that respondents could get in touch to clarify any doubt they may have.

The questionnaire is composed of six questions sorted into four sections. The first one collects the necessary data to confirm that the respondent meets the sample selection criteria: people enrolled in public universities of the Valencian Community. A set of socio-demographic questions (sex and age) was also included in the first section, although not for comparative purposes at least for this research. The second section asks respondents to rank their interest in healthy eating using a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents are then asked to rate, using the same scale, the CSR actions restaurant and fast food franchises carry out in the area of healthy eating promotion. The last section aims to identify respondents' preferred sources of information to learn about food-related topics. Two multiple-choice questions are included to identify the information sources according to author type (bloggers, influencers, media, companies and organizations, etc.) and, where applicable, social networks (Facebook, Twitter, etc.). In both cases, respondents could add more answer options.

The survey had the participation of 383 voluntary, anonymous, non-compensated university students. None of the participants withdrew from the survey, and only those who did not meet the sample selection criteria were discarded from it (27). Data were collected and processed using SPSS 26.

## Sample

The sample of franchises was selected based on the "Situation and trends report of hospitality and restaurant and fast food franchises 2019"<sup>38</sup>, which includes the most important companies in the sector. Having identified all companies, and to work with a manageable convenience sample, the authors selected a total of eight companies that meet the following criteria: top international franchises operating in Spain (Table 1).

The analysis considered all content posted in Twitter in 2018 by all brands, except for Subway, whose Spanish corporate profile ceased posting on 4/12/2017. In this case, the period of analysis covered from January to December 2017. During the period of analysis, the total number of posts made by the brands ranged from 300 to about 1.100. To select the sample of posts, the Twitter Decahose algorithm was used<sup>10,39</sup>. Of



the sets of posts, 10% was selected as a representative sample. Given the differences between the total number of posts made in each account and, in order to make an objective comparison in terms of online engagement, the algorithm was applied to the account with the highest number of posts, which resulted on a sample of 100 posts in all cases.

As far as the survey is concerned, the chosen population focuses on young university students. This segment has been validated as an effective substitute for other user profiles (non-students and adults) in several empirical studies in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT)<sup>40,41</sup>. In addition, it is a segment of great interest in the field of CSR due to the lower skepticism it shows regarding CSR communication<sup>25</sup>. This validates the selection of a sample of Spanish university students to address the main objective of this research.

The sample size is structured proportionally to the statistical data of the Spanish Ministry of Education and Vocational Training<sup>(f)</sup>, which indicates that during the 2017-2018 academic year, 87.923 students, aged 18 to 25, were enrolled in undergraduate studies at public universities in the Valencian Community (Spain). Based on this figure, the final sample size was set at 383 students, which implies a 5% margin of error and a 95% confidence interval, assuming a 50% degree of heterogeneity<sup>42</sup>. This type of segmentation (geographical and by university type) has already been used and validated in previous research<sup>43</sup>. The final sample is composed by a total of 383 students (male and female), aged 18 to 25, enrolled in public universities in the Valencian Community.

<sup>(f)</sup> Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. Statistics. <http://www.educacionyfp.gob.es/servicios-al-ciudadano-mecd/estadisticas/educacion/universitaria/estadisticas/alumnado.html>

## Results

### Analysis of formal CSR communication

The content analysis of the websites of the selected brands confirms that some of them do include references to their CSR policies (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Results of the analysis of formal communication of the CSR (websites)

Brand	URL	Corporate website (company)		Corporate website (business group)	
		CSR	CSR healthy eating	CSR	CSR healthy eating
McDonald's	<a href="https://www.mcdonalds.es/empresa/compromisos">https://www.mcdonalds.es/empresa/compromisos</a>	Yes	Yes	-	-
Foster's Hollywood	<a href="http://www.zena.com/CSR">http://www.zena.com/CSR</a> ; <a href="https://www.alsea.net/sustentabilidad/informes-anuales">https://www.alsea.net/sustentabilidad/informes-anuales</a>	No	No	Yes	Yes
Pans & Company	<a href="http://www.eatout.es/">http://www.eatout.es/</a>	No	No	Yes	Yes
Subway	<a href="http://subwayspain.com/es/">http://subwayspain.com/es/</a>	Yes	Yes	-	-
Lizarran	<a href="https://www.comessgroup.com/sobre-nosotros/responsabilidad-social-corporativa/">https://www.comessgroup.com/sobre-nosotros/responsabilidad-social-corporativa/</a>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
100 Montaditos	<a href="https://www.gruporestalia.com/">https://www.gruporestalia.com/</a>	No	No	No	No
Domino's Pizza	<a href="http://www.zena.com/CSR">http://www.zena.com/CSR</a> ; <a href="https://www.alsea.net/sustentabilidad/informes-anuales">https://www.alsea.net/sustentabilidad/informes-anuales</a>	No	No	Yes	Yes
La Tagliattela	<a href="https://www.amrest.eu/es/acerca-de-amrest/valores-corporativos">https://www.amrest.eu/es/acerca-de-amrest/valores-corporativos</a>	No	No	No	No

Note: (-) = It does not have a website  
Source: Authors' own creation.

McDonald's is the brand that gives the most importance to CSR on its corporate website. It shows how the company promotes healthy eating through a healthy and balanced diet.

In the case of Foster's Hollywood, the last post on CSR available on the corporate website of the group that owns it was made in 2017. This post sets out its "Global Sustainability Model", which represents its main business value. This management model is composed of four commissions, of which the third one is focused on responsible consumption and aims to promote a healthy lifestyle based on exercise and a balanced diet. In this same situation is the Domino's Pizza brand, which belongs to the same business group.

The Pans & Company website does not include any reference to CSR but makes an explicit allusion to its commitment to food safety as a basic principle of the sustainability of the group it belongs to. In this area, it highlights its interest in providing clear information about its products and ingredients, as well as in advising on healthy lifestyles.

For Subway, both food safety and food quality are basic pillars, which is reflected in the obligatory nature of its "Gold Standard" and "Regional Standard" of Food Quality and Safety, which ensures that its suppliers only deliver the best products available to SUBWAY® restaurant and fast foods.



The corporate website of the Lizarran brand has published a CSR report which does not make any reference to healthy eating. However, the CSR section of the corporate website of the business group Lizarran belongs to, does make a reference to a healthy lifestyle habits plan.

The websites of 100 Montaditos and La Tagliatella do not present any documents or links that redirect users to their respective CSR policies. Therefore, as in previous cases, we also reviewed the websites of the business groups they belong to, but none of them made any reference to topics related to healthy eating.

## Analysis of informal CSR communication

**Table 2.** Results of informal CSR communication analysis (Twitter)

		McDonald's	Foster's Hollywood	Pans & Company	Subway	Lizarran	100 Montaditos	Domino's Pizza	La Tagliatella
Type of content in the post	Corporate and business information	7	6	49	19	4	7	2	23
	Products and services	31	50	34	48	78	59	61	60
	Promotions and offers	40	42	10	7	10	17	27	1
	Customer service, courtesy...	6	2	7	26	8	17	10	16
	About CSR	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Type of CSR content	Actions not related to food or exercise	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Nutritional facts of products	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Healthy eating habits	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Good exercise practices	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Authors' own creation.

As shown in Table 2, most of the tweets and retweets analyzed contain information about the products offered by the different brands, followed by those that focus on promotions and offers, and corporate and business information. The individual analysis indicates that while McDonald's prioritizes the content of its posts in promotions and offers, the rest of the brands focus on providing information about their products and services.

Regarding CSR communication, only McDonald's presents tweets and retweets of this type. To be precise, it has made 16 posts about its CSR actions, of which only 5 relate to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, specifically the practice of exercise.

Also in the field of social networks, user interactivity was analyzed to determine the degree of interest generated by CSR communication on healthy eating in comparison to the rest of tweets and retweets through the of online engagement formula<sup>36</sup>.

**Table 3.** User interaction

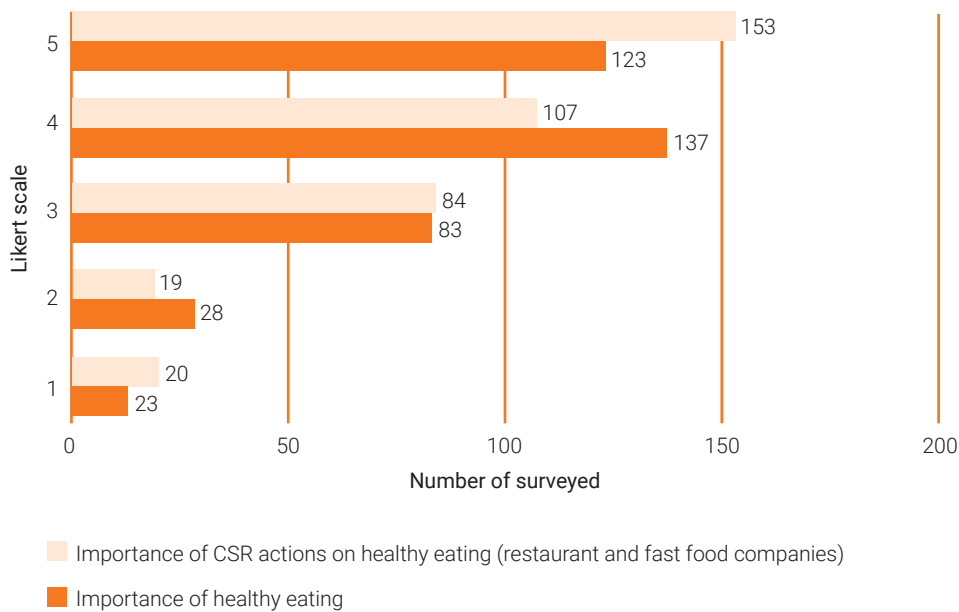
	McDonald's	Foster's Hollywood	Pans & Company	Subway	Lizarran	100 Montaditos	Domino's Pizza	La Tagliatella
<b>Publications on CSR</b>								
Comments	1.278	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Retweets	3.068	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Likes	11.224	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Online engagement	97.313	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Other publications</b>								
Comments	8.640	57	62	52	172	445	0	1.374
Retweets	9.891	220	4	139	75	1.181	6	824
Likes	51.993	595	379	571	234	4.488	33	4.020
Online engagement	83.957	872	481	6.114	762	445	39	6.218

Source: Authors' own creation.

As data in table 3 confirm, the level of online engagement of CSR posts is higher than that of other posts in the only case in which CSR-related tweets and retweets were posted.

## Survey results

The results of the survey applied to Spanish university students confirm the advantages of using social networks for CSR communication on healthy eating.



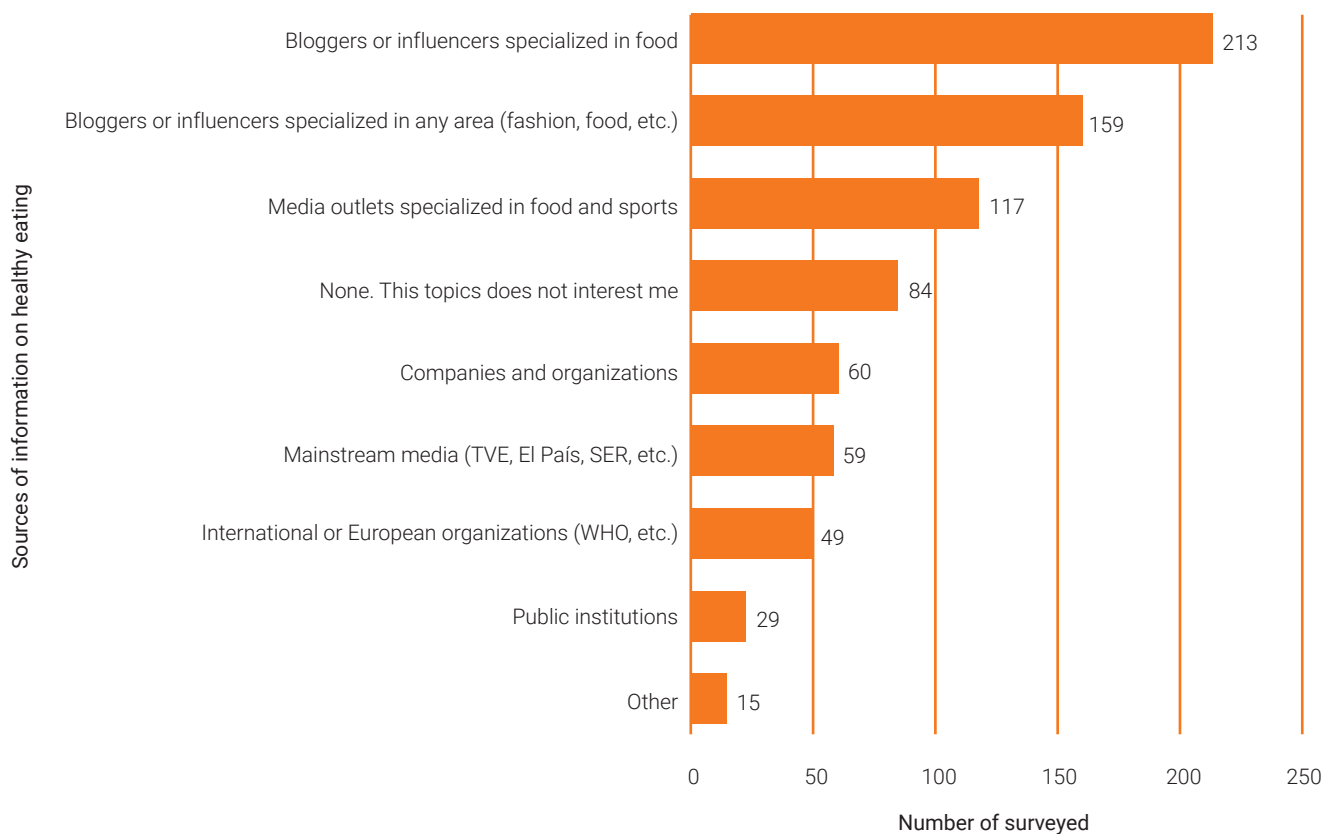
**Figure 2.** Assessment of healthy eating and related CSR actions (Survey, n = 383)

Source: Authors' own creation.

As shown in Figure 2, healthy eating is a relevant topic for young people. So much so, that 35.9% (137) acknowledge that they quite agree with this statement and 32.15% (123) absolutely agree.

Having analyzed the importance young people attach to healthy eating, we examined their perception of the CSR actions carried out by restaurant and fast food companies in this area. In this regard, it was found that 67.89% (260 = 107 4-point scores + 153 5-point scores) of respondents agreed with the CSR actions restaurant and fast food companies carry out in the promotion of healthy eating habits. On the other hand, it should be noted that only 10.18% (20+19) believe that such actions are not necessary within the CSR policies of companies in this sector.

Finally, the sources of information preferred by young Spaniards regarding healthy eating are identified in figure 3.



**Figure 3.** Sources of information on healthy eating (Survey, n = 383)

Source: Authors' own creation.

As shown in Figure 3, from the group of social networks outlets, the channels preferred by respondents to learn about healthy eating habits are the accounts of bloggers and influencers specialized on the subject. A total of 213 respondents, 55.6%, said so. The second most important source is bloggers and influencers who are not necessarily specialists on healthy eating (159 or 41.5%).

It should also be noted that the sources that could be considered official, i.e. public institutions and European and international bodies, such as the WHO, were placed in the last positions. Regarding companies and organizations, they have been identified as an information source by 60 respondents (15.67%). Only 84 (21.93%) respondents stated that they were not interested in the subject and that, as a result, they did not consult any source.

Finally, respondents were asked about their preferred social networks to learn about this topic. The results confirmed the clear dominance of Instagram (357, 93.21%) and YouTube (312, 81.46%) when it comes to obtaining information on healthy eating habits. These sites are followed by Facebook (167, 43.60%), Twitter (82, 21.41%) and WhatsApp (55, 14.36%), but at a considerable distance. The rest of the social networks have been identified as information sources in much fewer cases. Finally, 88 (22.98%) respondents said they did not use social networks to learn about healthy eating, which is in line with the 84 (21.93%) respondents who said they were not interested in the topic and therefore did not consult any sources (Figure 3).

## Discussion and conclusions

The influence of CSR on the public perception of an organization<sup>44</sup> has transformed corporate communication<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, it is relevant to investigate, both at the academic and professional levels, the key issues organizations should structure their CSR policies around, as well as the ideal channels for CSR communication. In this sense, it has been verified that the development of corporate policies and strategies aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle, based on healthy eating, should be one of the main objectives of a large number of companies in the current market, particularly in the case of restaurant and fast food companies<sup>19,20,22,32</sup>. This situation is the basis of the first research hypothesis (H1) and what motivated the analysis of corporate websites to evaluate the formal CSR communication<sup>29</sup> of the sample of franchises in the restaurant and fast food industry, as well as their promotion of a healthy diet.

The results are encouraging as all the brands, with the exception of two (La Tagliatella and 100 Montaditos) communicate issues related to their CSR policies on their corporate websites and/or in the websites of the business groups they belong to. In addition, most of the brands of the sample contemplate actions related to healthy eating, either on their corporate website (McDonald's and Subway) or on the website of the business group they belong to (Foster's Hollywood, Pans & Company, Lizarran and Domino's Pizza) in line with the postulates relating to the fit of the reported CSR activities, which requires the coherence and adjustment of CSR performance in relation to the organization's main activity<sup>45,46</sup>.

Despite the exceptions mentioned above, it can be said that most companies are aware of the importance of developing CSR policies<sup>1,5,6</sup> and of communicating them formally<sup>29</sup>. These findings partially confirm the first hypothesis (H1), which states that franchise companies in the restaurant and fast food industry promote healthy eating as part of their CSR policies, in response to the demands of society<sup>13,47</sup> and their own interests<sup>1-3,5,6</sup>.

The second hypothesis (H2) focuses on informal CSR communication<sup>29</sup> and on the benefits that it may bring to the organizations themselves<sup>1,8</sup>, whether they properly exploit the communicative potential of social networks, among the younger stakeholders. The results in this area reject the hypothesis since only McDonald's has posted CSR-related tweets and retweets, confirming the conclusions reached by Capriotti and Zeler<sup>8</sup>, who noted that CSR activities are communicated with little frequency on social networks. In addition, none of McDonald's CSR-related posts are about food, and the proportion of such tweets to the total number of posts is much lower than would be expected depending on the advantages that have been identified by the aforementioned authors<sup>8</sup> and have been confirmed in this research through the level of online engagement achieved.

Finally, following the ideas of Schmeltz<sup>25</sup>, and to corroborate the previous conclusion regarding the advantages of carrying out CSR communication on healthy eating on social networks, the study proceeded to evaluate hypotheses H2.1, H2.2 and H2.3. The results confirmed the second hypothesis (H2). First, young Spaniards are interested and concerned about healthy eating and appreciate when restaurant and fast food companies carry out CSR actions in this regard. With regards to information sources and channels, social networks are excellent for CSR communication and contribute to the achievement of business objectives<sup>24</sup> in the restaurant and fast food industry and in the area of healthy eating.

However, the results also highlight some relevant aspects that brands should consider in the development of CSR communication strategies in order to achieve their main goals. First, CSR communication strategies must take into account the credibility of the source and the advantages of integrating bloggers and influencers. It is confirmed, therefore, that when it comes to CSR communication, young people, like the general public, give more credibility to those sources that are not controlled by the organization<sup>1</sup> than to messages issued by it. However, depending on the number of respondents who also claim to obtain information on healthy eating from the accounts of companies and organizations (60 or 15.6%), there is less skepticism among the population segment under study (young people) regarding CSR communication, as pointed out by Schmeltz<sup>25</sup>, in the field of healthy eating promotion.

Finally, regarding the most common social networks, Instagram and YouTube stand out, shifting interest from Twitter, the subject of this research. The results in this area confirm Instagram's leadership among young people<sup>11,48</sup>. Alongside Instagram, YouTube is one of the social network users value the most and the favorite to follow influencers<sup>48</sup>. This justifies the protagonism of both social networks as information sources on healthy eating.



The results confirm the advantages of social networks (H2.3), but also dispute Twitter's suitability as a CSR communication channel<sup>12,14,15</sup> when the target audience is young people. This is the main limitation of this research, which is planned to be solved in subsequent phases by extending the sample to other audience segments and other social networks.

Despite the limitations observed, the research makes relevant contributions for the academic and professional fields in relation to CSR communication in sectors with economic and social relevance<sup>7,18,49</sup>.

### Contribution of the authors

The lead author, Alba-María Martínez-Sala, conceived and designed the research, carried out part of the literature review and participated in the field work. María-Carmen Quiles-Soler, also developed part of the literature review, participated in the field work, and was responsible for data tabulation. Juan Monserrat-Gauchi carried out the literature review and participated in the field work. All authors have been actively involved in the discussion of the results, the critical review of the contents, and the writing of the final version of the work.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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É analisada a comunicação de Responsabilidade Social Corporativa (RSC) de uma amostra de oito empresas de restaurantes e fast food. Um método exploratório e descritivo, baseado na técnica de análise de conteúdo é usado para analisar os canais de comunicação formais e informais de RSC usados para promover uma alimentação saudável nos seus respectivos sites e perfis no Twitter. Este estudo é complementado por uma pesquisa para descobrir o interesse na alimentação dos jovens espanhóis ( $n = 383$ ), sua avaliação da RSC nessa área e os canais de informação usados para esse fim. Os resultados verificam a integração em suas políticas de RSE de ações relacionadas à promoção de hábitos alimentares saudáveis. Conclui-se sobre a conveniência de utilizar redes sociais próprias e influenciadores para estimular esse tipo de hábitos, dentro de suas políticas de RSE de maneira mais eficaz.

**Palavras-chave:** Comunicação. Responsabilidade social corporativa. *Fast food*. Alimentação saudável. Redes sociais.

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Se analiza la comunicación de la Responsabilidad Social Corporativa (RSC) de una muestra de ocho empresas de restauración y *fast food*. Se sigue una metodología exploratoria y descriptiva para analizar mediante un análisis de contenido la comunicación formal e informal de RSC respecto de la promoción de una alimentación saludable en sus respectivas webs y perfiles en Twitter. Este estudio se complementa con una encuesta ( $n = 383$ ) sobre el interés por la alimentación de los jóvenes españoles, su valoración de la RSC en este ámbito y los canales de información utilizados al respecto. Los resultados verifican la integración en sus políticas de RSC de acciones relativas a la promoción de hábitos alimenticios saludables. Se concluye acerca de la conveniencia de uso de sus propias redes sociales y de *influencers*, para incentivar este tipo de hábitos, dentro de sus políticas de RSC.

**Palabras clave:** Comunicación. Responsabilidad social corporativa. *Fast food*. Alimentación saludable. Redes sociales.